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Rick Osterloh (L), SVP, Google, and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw | PTI

GOOGLE TO ROLL OUT MADE-IN-INDIA PIXEL 8 SMARTPHONES IN 2024

Internet search giant Google will manufacture the Pixel 8 series of smartphones in India. The first such phone will be rolled out from 2024, an official said

FIRM SEES SIGNIFICANT MOMENTUM FOR PIXEL

CEO Sundar Pichai said Google is committed to being a trusted partner in the country's digital growth story. Google's senior V-P Rick Osterloh said the company will partner with international contract manufacturers to make the phones in India. The company said India is a priority for Pixel as it has seen significant momentum in the country over the past several years

GPAY TO OFFER CREDIT FACILITY OF ₹15,000

- GPay announced a credit facility for consumers and merchants in partnership with banks and NBFCs for loans, starting from ₹15,000
- To curb financial fraud, Google launched an early threat detection and warning system called DigiKavach, designed to identify and study emerging financial fraud patterns and develop countermeasures

98%

OF MOBILE PHONES USED IN THE COUNTRY ARE MADE IN INDIA

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

PM reiterates position on peaceful coexistance of Israel, Palestine; India seeks strict observance of humanitarian law

In balancing act, Modi reaches out to Palestine Prez

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday offered condolences to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on the horrific loss of civilian lives from a projectile that fell near a hospital in Gaza City a couple of days ago.

"I spoke with President Abbas and conveyed my condolences at the loss of civilian lives at the Al Ahli hospital in Gaza. We will continue to send humanitarian assistance to Palestinian people. I also shared our deep concern at the terrorism, violence and deteriorating security situation in the region. Reiterated India's long-standing principled position on the Israel-Palestine issue," Modi said on X.

It was seen as a balancing act after Modi's conversation with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on October 10, when he said, "People of India stand firmly with Israel in this difficult hour."

Around 500 people have been reported killed in the explosion on the hospital in Gaza, triggering global anger. India has already condemned the terrorist attack on Israel and reiterated that the international community must stand together in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

"As regards Palestine, we have reiterated our long standing position of advocating the resumption of direct negotiations towards establishing a sovereign, independent and viable state of Palestine living within secure and recognised borders, side by side at peace with Israel," said Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi.

India is extremely concerned about the humanitarian situation. "We would urge the full respect and strict observance of international humanitarian law," Bagchi added.

Palestinians evacuate wounded people from a building that was hit by an airstrike in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip on Thursday | AP

Relief materials being unloaded from a cargo plane at Egypt's el-Arish airport

Get ready to enter Gaza, Israeli forces told

Israel's defence minister on Thursday told ground troops to be ready to enter Gaza, though he didn't say when the invasion will start. In a meeting with Israeli soldiers, Yoav Gallant told them to "get organised, be ready"

AID TRUCKS TO ROLL IN TODAY

AGENCIES

EVEN as Israeli airstrikes continued to pound Gaza on Thursday, about 100 trucks carrying relief materials waited in Egypt to enter the impoverished Palestinian enclave through the Rafah crossing.

US President Joe Biden and Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah al-Sisi struck a deal, with Israel's approval, to allow an initial batch of 20 aid trucks to enter Gaza. Egyptian media reported that the border crossing will open on Friday for the trucks to roll into Gaza.

The UN, which put Gaza's humanitarian aid needs at 100 trucks per day, said 20 trucks worth of aid, is far below the requirement. "We need to start with a serious number of trucks going in and we need to build up to 100 trucks a day," the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths said.

In his way back home, Biden told journalists that he was very blunt with Israeli leaders on humanitarian assistance to Gaza. "Look, Israel has been badly victimised. But the truth is that if they have an opportunity to relieve the suffering of people who have nowhere to go, it's what they should do. And if they don't, they'll be held accountable," Biden said.

Meanwhile, Thursday's Israeli strikes on Gaza, targeted parts of south Gaza that Israel had declared as a safe zone. Jordan's King Abdullah II flew to Cairo and held talks with al-Sisi. Both condemned what they called the "collective punishment" of Palestinians in Gaza and warned that if the fighting does not stop, it risks spilling over.

Gowda acts, removes Ibrahim, makes HDK JDS state president

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

JANATA Dal (Secular) state president CM Ibrahim, who had raised a banner of revolt against the party's decision to forge an alliance with the BJP for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, has been removed from the party's top post in the state. Former Prime Minister and JDS national president HD Deve Gowda on Thursday dissolved the state unit headed by Ibrahim and appointed his son and former Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy as the new ad-hoc president of the state unit of the regional party.

Ibrahim had openly opposed the party's decision to go with BJP and claimed that he is the "original JDS" and that the party would support the I.N.D.I.A bloc and not the BJP-led NDA in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. After his outbursts against the party leadership, many JDS leaders had demanded action against Ibrahim.

The decision to make changes in the party was taken by consensus during a meeting attended by Gowda, Kumaraswamy, members of the party's core committee, and legislators, said a note issued by the party. P4

JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda at a party meeting in Bengaluru | EXPRESS

NOT EXPECTED SUCH A DECISION: IBRAHIM

Reacting to the party decision, CM Ibrahim said he would take the next course of action after discussing it with the party workers. He accused the JDS president of not encouraging any Vokkaliga community leaders to grow in the party. "I had not expected such a decision from you (Gowda)," Ibrahim said, reacting to Gowda's decision to remove him from the party post.

Centre eases import restrictions on PCs, laptops and tablets

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

THE Centre on Thursday eased the curbs on import of laptops as it announced a simpler, online authorisation system for the purchase of seven electronic items including laptops, tablets, and all-in-all personal computers from overseas markets. Commerce ministry officials said the end-to-end online import management system, which will kick in on November 1, 2023, is aimed at monitoring shipments of laptops, tablets and PCs without hurting market supply or creating a cumbersome licensing regime. Importers will be able to bring in these electronic products after specifying the quantity and value, and obtaining the authorisation online. The authorisation will be valid till September 30, 2024.

Importers can change the quantity of goods purchased even after the issuance of an import authorisation.

The government had announced a ban on import of laptops, tablets and personal computers in August 2023. Later, it clarified that there was no ban but electronic manufacturing firms would need to apply for licence to import these items from November 1, 2023.

However, after protests from the industry and some trading partners including the US, the government has now watered down the restrictions. According to the commerce ministry, 59% (in value terms) of the seven restricted items are imported from China, 16% from Singapore, and 9% from Hong Kong.

S Krishnan, secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, said the purpose of the new import management system is to establish a reliable supply chain for these electronic devices and promote domestic manufacturing. He added that no WTO norms would be violated by the restrictions. After September 2024, Krishnan said the government will study the data, interact with the industry, and then decide on ways to move forward.

ONLINE CLEARANCE

- The new system allows importers of IT hardware to bring in shipments from overseas on a mere 'authorisation' upon detailing quantity and value
- The new regime will be a big relief to tech giants as they won't require a licence to import
- While seeking authorisation, an importer will have to provide an import item summary and details of past import, export & turnover
- Govt won't reject any import requests and will use the data to monitor the inbound shipments

BALAJI BAIL PLEA DISMISSED

The Madras High Court on Thursday dismissed the bail plea of DMK's V Senthil Balaji, arrested by the ED in a money laundering case. P5

EXPRESS INTAKE

BJP wants minister Patil to quit | P4

NE Monsoon may hit TN in 72 hours | P5

Naidu's remand extended till Nov 1 | P5

HC won't quash CBI's FIR against DKS in graft case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IN a setback to Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, the Karnataka High Court on Thursday declined to quash the FIR registered by the CBI for allegedly possessing Rs 74.93 crore disproportionate assets during the check period 2013-18 when he was a minister.

DK Shivakumar

Noting that there was inordinate delay by Shivakumar in approaching the High Court for quashing of the FIR, Justice K Natarajan pronounced the order dismissing his petition filed in 2022 which questioned the FIR registered by the CBI in 2020.

Further, the court said Shivakumar appeared before the CBI and offered explanation by producing voluminous documents and most of the investigation has been concluded. Hence the court cannot appreciate the documents or evidence offered by him without conclusion of the investigation, as it amounts to conducting a mini trial for quashing of the FIR, the court added. Directing the CBI to complete the investigations and file a final report within three months, the court vacated the stay granted for the investigation and gave liberty to Shivakumar, the state Congress president, to challenge the final report if he is aggrieved by the same.

On Shivakumar's allegations of delay in investigation and filing of charge sheet, the CBI informed the court that the investigation was stopped as there was Covid-19 lockdown when the FIR was registered. After investigation commenced, the petitioner submitted an explanation containing 11 volumes of around 2,412 pages. P4

Rural service not mandatory for all doctors: Minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IN a relief for new doctors who come out of medical colleges, the state cabinet on Thursday decided to relax the law regarding compulsory rural service by bringing in the Compulsory Rural Service Amendment Bill 2023 and approving it through an ordinance.

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil, told reporters after the cabinet meeting that they had decided to change the compulsory rural service norm for all doctors, instead recruiting them depending on posts available or to the extent the government decides. He said the rule applies to MBBS graduates as well as those who have completed their post-graduation.

"It is not compulsory for all. Doctors will be recruited to fill all the vacant posts, and if required the government can also take more doctors. We will recruit depending on the requirements, and not all. It will be an unnecessary waste of human resources if we send three doctors to one village," the minister, said responding to a question on the reason for making the changes.

CONTINUED ON: P6

A NEW BENCHMARK IN SCHOOL EDUCATION COMES TO KERALA

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Opening of the Junior Section is proposed on June 3, 2024.

*Requisite clearances from the regulatory authorities will be sought on time.